

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 003226

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA, EUR/WE AND S/I

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [IT](#) [IRAQI](#) [FREEDOM](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ: ITALY REASSURES IT WILL NOT CUT AND RUN

REF: SEPTEMBER 21 ROME DAILY REPORT

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Jonathan Cohen for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. Italian MFA officials, commenting on the recent visit to Rome by Dhi Qar province Governor Aziz Kadum Aluan Al Aghely, insist that Italy has no intention of withdrawing more troops from Iraq in the near future. As conditions permit, however, they do envision a progressive withdrawal. End summary.

2. (C) PolOffs spoke with Gianni Bardini, MFA NATO Office Director, on September 21, regarding statements made by Dhi Qar province Governor Aziz Kadum Aluan Al Aghely during his September 20 official visit to Rome regarding Italian troop withdrawals (Ref A). Bardini said Italy had no intention of additional troops in the near future. The recent withdrawal of 300 troops had been possible because it had no effect on Italy's operational ability to carry out its mission in Iraq. Further withdrawals would only occur as the security conditions on the ground permit, he said, and in consultation with coalition partners and the Iraqi government. He said the Italian government was taken by surprise by the Governor's assertion that Italy could carry out additional withdrawals by year's end.

3. (C) PolOff also discussed Al Aghely's comments with MFA Iraq Task Force Director Luigi Maccotta on September 26. Maccotta echoed Bardini's comments, noting that Al Aghely's private remarks to MFA officials were in complete harmony with Italy's position on troop withdrawals as well as that of the coalition partners: immediate troop reductions are impossible, as exiting now would only lead to chaos. Italy will not "cut and run," Maccotta stressed. However, as the Iraqis build up their own security forces, a progressive withdrawal will be possible. For the time being, however, Maccotta said, Al Aghely asked Italy to keep its troops in Iraq.

SPOGLI

NNNN

2005ROME003226 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL